It's hard work
Ice is more expensive
Than 10 years ago
So is gas…and groceries
There aren't as many Salmon
The price on fish is less
Than 10 years ago

The salmon of the Pacific
Northwest aren't
Alone in facing
Extinction.

The Gillnetters of
The Pacific Northwest
Are also a breed in danger.

In late 2003 I was fortunate
Enough to work on
Doug Karlgoods 40 foot
Aluminum bow picker
The Mrs. Sue K

I got a chance to be a
Gillnetter.
I took it. I always take
my chances.

They may never come again.

Doug Karlberg
On the Mrs. Sue K
With the Cherry Point Refinery
In the background and
Chum on the decks

When you want to keep a
Fish for “take home”
You slit it’s throat and
Bleed it.

Me watching the sunrise
Over Vancouver, British Columbia

Gillnetters usually work all night
So sunrise means the day
is ending

We saw Orcas playing near
The end of our net.

The BP–1 was our
Running mate in Everett.
Jim was born on Lummi Island
And has been a
Commercial fisherman
For most of his life.

He's having a hard time
Making it as a Gillnetter

Of course,
Fishermen having a
Hard time is nothing new

Fishermen are used to
Toughing it out through
The slow times.

Good times have always
Returned…so far.

Going through the Slough
To get to Seattle
Was so much more
Than I thought it would be

It was freezing cold but Doug
And I stayed on deck
Watching the scenery appear

Then stepping in the cabin
To defrost our frozen noses

The Boathouse was
worn
but the new house
was ugly

I'd been in this spot
Before but on the bank
It's different there

Gary
Loves killing fish
He talks on his
Cellphone while he
Lays his net

Some fishermen embrace technology

Some fishermen don't though

Charlie has been fishing
For most of his life too

The Lisa is a
Sternpicker and
Made of wood

Most Gillnetters
Work alone these days

Sunrise on the water
And I thought
About how simple life
Can be.

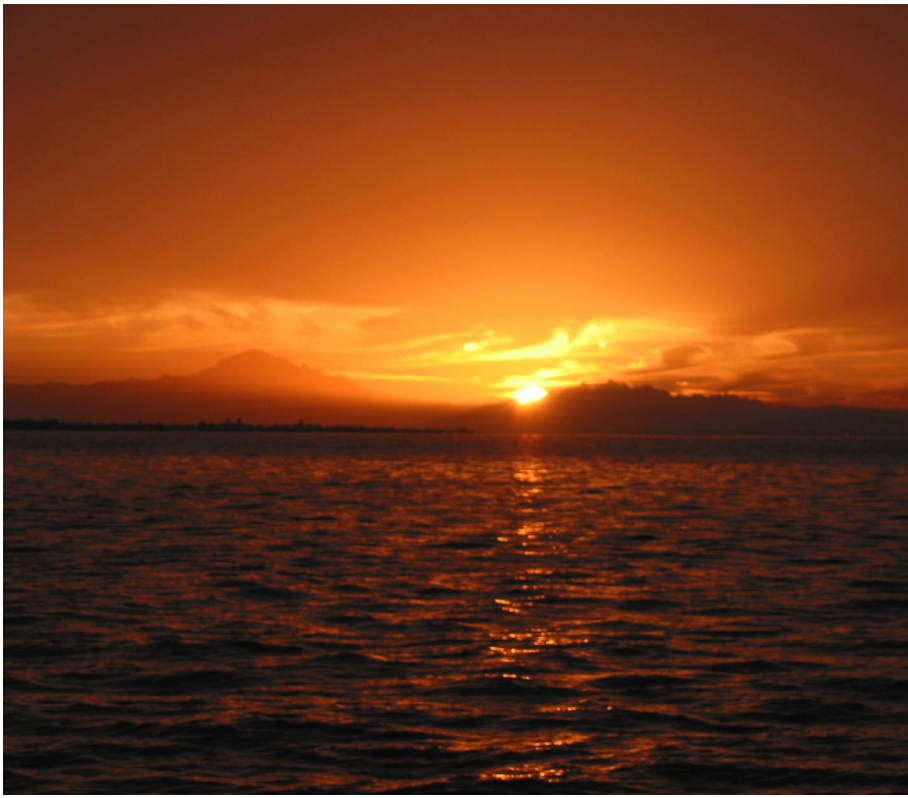
A new day and
Another chance to
Catch a whole mess of fish

Always hopeful….

A few years ago
There were 200 + gillnet boats
For this opening

This time it's
Jim, Charlie, Gary, Doug,
And me.

That's all. Four boats.



You've got to watch out for traffic
While you're fishing
In Puget Sound

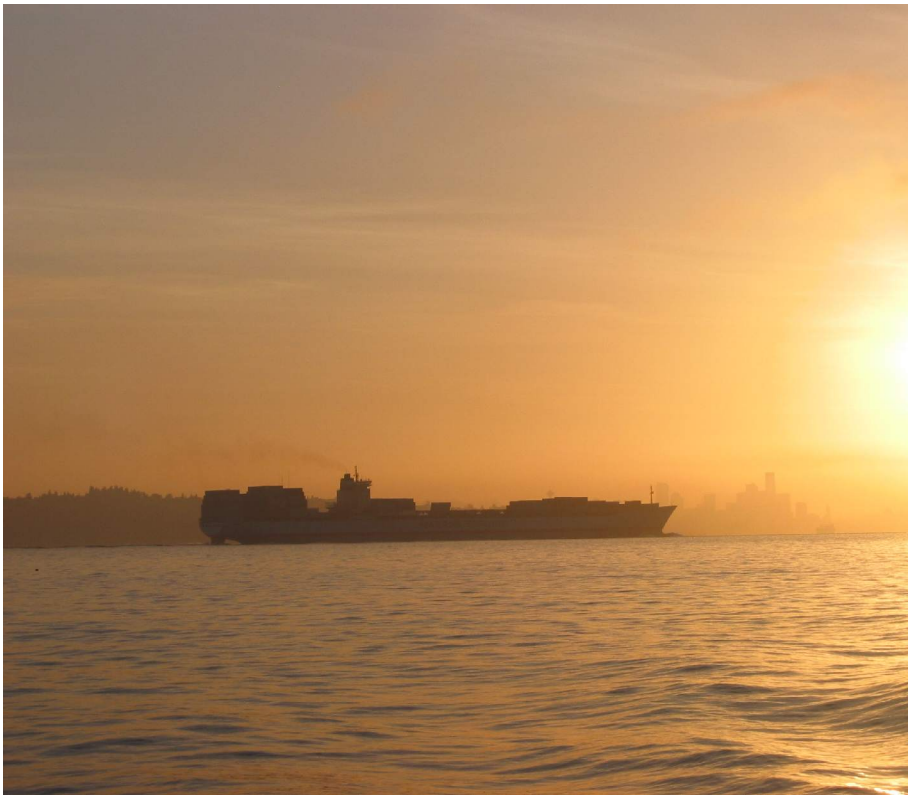
Tugboats, barges, and
Oil tankers make their way
From China, Japan, Canada, and
Seattle

There's no shortage of stuff.

Mt. Baker sits over the
Top of Lummi Island

Shuksan and Kulshan
Were the Native American
Names for Baker

It was named for a
Crewman on Capt George Vancouver's
Ship Discovery



The traffic in Seattle is
Dangerous at night

Imagine an oil tanker
Smashing a little boat like
The Mrs. Sue K

But sunrise is beautiful
With Seattle's skyline
In the background

Plus

Sunrise means the
Nights work is almost
Through

Just need to ice the fish in
The hatches,
Haul em to a tender
Hope for a good price
And then clean up the boat

A lot of Gillnetters have
Switched to purse seining

It’s more expensive but you
Can catch more fish and
Therefore make more money

But you need a crew for
Seining
At least four able bodies

Someone to steer the
Big boat and someone
To pilot the small boat
Couple people to haul the net

And there you have it
But most Seiners have a
Cook too.

At the end of the day
You feel worn out and
Good.

Like you've done some
Real work

And all them fish in the hold
Mean more than a meal
They're a dream

And when it comes
Down to it

All fishermen are
Nothing
If they aren't dreamers

Fisherman Dreams